Geneva 18 January 1849.

The students of the Theological School of Geneva
to their dear brethren, studying in the Seminary of Princeton,
greeting.

Dear friends and brethren in Jesus Christ,

The numerous details which were communicated to you in our last letter, concerning the events which are passing in the several countries that surround us, France, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy, have informed you at once of the general state of agitation into which men's minds could not but be thrown during the memorable year that has just come to a close, and of the peace which God permits us to enjoy at Geneva for our studies. We will be more brief in this letter; the events are too many to be related in detail, and besides, the journals probably give you in America the greater part of the most important news which we receive at Geneva.

But there is one thing, dear brethren, that we take pleasure in observing; that is, the faithfulness of the Lord with regard to his Church. Being in the world, the Church cannot remain insensible to the agitations of the world; so if at times she suffers materially from them, she receives on the other hand spiritual blessings which compensate richly for her sufferings. Every where she has been at least touched, if not profoundly moved by the course of events; her position

which has become so equivocal that the social (relations?) estate can no longer be distinguished from the ecclesiastical and Christian, the world from the church, she has been forced to define, & to take sides, either by a voluntary subjection, effected in a deliberate & legal manner, to some secular authority; or by setting herself free with courage and at whatever sacrifice. The time will come, we hope, when, self-sustained by the power which is in her members, or rather by the power of the Lord, manifesting himself with glory in her, she will cease to have recourse to the treasury of those who do not share in her faith. For our own part, if the Lord deigns to employ us, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, the edification of the body of Christ, our efforts as ministers shall tend to deliver the churches over which we shall be placed from all these old vestiges of Judaism & Catholicism, with which our Protestantism is still surcharged. Already for some years, remonstrances the most energetic, which we hear near at hand, have been lifted up against clericalism, and sacerdotalism. This language seems violent to many Christians; and there have been, in consequence, conflicts, and bitter discussions in the papers, even between theologians united by faith in Christ. Examples may be found in the "Reformation of the 19th Century," a journal published at Geneva by Ch. Scherer, and in "L'Espérance" (The Hope), a journal published at Paris by [redacted] orthodox [redacted] national church. — But no work of God can be hindered; the truth cannot be held in bondage. The services which her own children, too little enlightened to recognize her, or not sufficiently devoted to bear her witness, refuse to pay, are sometimes rendered to her cause by the children of falsehood, in spite of

themselves, and without their own knowledge. This is what has occurred in these latter times. Political event have come to fight for her. There has not been a revolution in the State that has not been followed by some movement in the Church, trifling enough at first, perhaps, but at all times more favorable to the progress of the truth & of life, than a state of fixedness & stagnation.

You have perhaps received information of the fears of the French clergy that the Republic would decree the separation of Church and State. That separation would probably have brought with it another ~~more important~~ benefit, more important and more necessary, in which indeed consists the importance of the former, namely, the separation of the Evangelical party from the rationalists; who, uttering in the same pulpit such different doctrines, inevitably depreciate, in the eyes of the people, the dignity of the ministerial office, and the sacredness of the Gospel. Associated as colleagues, not because they have received their calling from the same Master, and have the same end in view, the conversion & salvation of souls, - but because they receive the same salary and depend upon the same treasury, the Socinian & the Orthodox pastors would certainly not have sought, with so great pains & management, a formula of union which at bottom answers the purpose only by being Equivocal, when once the budget of Establishment had been abolished. If the government had separated the temporal from the spiritual, the synod of Paris would have separated the believing from the unbelieving, the faithful from the infidel, the Gospel from rationalism. But neither the government nor the Synod chose to take so grave a step.

In Germany also there have been in various places synods which sound and very decided evangelical views have been seen with surprize manifesting themselves by the side of ~~rationalist~~ completely subversive rationalist tendencies. — In Switzerland there has been no change except in the French portion. In the Canton of Neuchatel the constitution of the Church has undergone a radical transformation; from an absolute aristocratic independency, it has changed into a very moderate democracy. In the Canton of Vaud, the free Church is still under the cross; but that cross seems to be alleviating, and the persecution, now for a moment abating, may, if such be the will of God, be near its end. At Geneva there is nothing new except the fusion of the dissenting Churches into one Church, which has taken the denomination of the Evangelical Church. Its confession of faith, at once precise and explicit, exhibits great liberality of views in regard to all which is merely accessory. Personal adherence is the only condition of admission. The direction of the church is confided to a presbytery composed of 20 elders chosen by the flock, the ministers of the Word being included among the elders.

As for Italy, it is in trouble in war. The liberal movement there meets with opposition from within and from without; nevertheless it goes on, and not without detriment to the papacy. People are less papist in Rome, than they are in France

when the pope, ill at ease in his residence, fled from Rome, the report straightway spread abroad that he was coming to Marseilles, and that a deputation would be sent to him from Paris to receive the head of Christendom. But Pius IX. could not resolve to leave Italy. He remains at Gaeta, in the Kingdom of Naples, near the frontiers of his own states, waiting until the opportunity is afforded of reentering them. His power as pontiff does not intimidate the Romans: and accordingly, feeling the impotence of anathemas, the insignificance of excommunications, he does not even attempt to resume these formidable weapons of the popes of other days. — In Piedmont, that focus of popery and superstition, that country as fruitful in bloody persecutors as some of it valleys have been in courageous martyrs, we see a journal, "The Gazette of the People," attack with almost brutal severity those priests, who can scarcely persuade themselves that the time of their despotism is passed away. That which, two years ago, would have been an unpardonable crime, has now nothing in it extraordinary or surprising. Yet it is not this language in itself that we rejoice in: on the ruins of superstition which we see strewed in some cities, we do not yet see faith appearing, — but it is faith that we should love to find.

You see, dear brethren, what is passing in the countries by which we are surrounded. The times seem to favor us and to call us to the work. Doubtless you suppose that we are zealously preparing for it, that we may enter the sooner into the field of the Lord. Alas! dear brethren, we are obliged

to confess that missionary zeal has rather become more feeble amongst us; and we have to be upon our guard so as not to fall under the influence of that spirit of discontent, of disgust with everything old; so as not to be carried away by a movement that is carrying away all the world, and that is not life, but agitation, the conflict of anger with death. Therefore we desire you, our beloved brethren & fellow laborers, who have the same end in view, and the same hope, to aid us in battle by your prayers, and to commend us to the almighty grace of God. With this request we close; & what we ask of you for ourselves, we will do in return, I trust, for you.

Your devoted brethren in Christ;
the students of the Theological School of Geneva,
and, in their name,
P. Geymonat, President.